

# **Wisconsin Governor's Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing MEETING MINUTES**

December 9, 2016

10:00AM

Room 751

1 W. Wilson Street, Madison, WI 53703

**Members present:** Nicole Everson (Chair), Denise Johnson (Vice Chair), Steve Smart, Lisa Woods, David Seligman, Karl Nollenberger

**Members excused:** Tom O'Connor (Secretary)

**Ex-Officio members:** Billy Mauldin

**Ex-officio members excused:** N/A

**ODHH Staff:** Amber Mullett (Social Services Supervisor) and Mason Aumanstal (Assistive Technology Program Coordinator)

**Interpreters:** Maria Kielma and Carly Bieri

**Communication Access Real-time Translation Provider:** Margo Lucas

**Chair called the meeting to order at 10:03 AM**

**Approval of October 14, 2016, minutes**

**Motion:** David motioned to approve the minutes as provided (Denise seconded).

**Passed:** unanimously.

**Update to December 9<sup>th</sup> Agenda:** Steve made a motion to replace the first 15 minute break scheduled for 10:25 with a discussion about Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community updates (Denise seconded).

**Passed:** unanimously

**ACTION:** Add a community update to the upcoming agendas.

**Community Updates:** Denise wanted to discuss Sign Language Interpreter Licensure. Steve confirmed that there was a report released by Collin Roth of the Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty (WILL) that discussed licensure across many professions in the State of Wisconsin (one specifically cited was Sign Language Interpreters). The report suggests that regulation and licensure rules aren't leading to quality and the industry and consumers of the profession will effectively 'police' the industry and weed out bad interpreters; this would, in turn, lead to more individuals joining the field leading to increased spending and a better State economy. Although the report is not legislative in nature, Denise's concern is that the Deaf community (as far as she's aware) was not approached when the report was being drafted.

**Motion:** Denise made a motion that the Council should write a letter in defense and support of Sign Language Interpreter Licensure to WILL (Lisa Seconded).

**Passed:** unanimously

**ACTION:** Lisa will draft language to be used in a letter to send to WILL and will develop some talking points on behalf of the Council Educating about the risks of lack of quality around sign language interpreting services.

**Council Strategic Plans:** As an informal facilitator, Amber provided the background for developing a good plan and discussed the demographics of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities in the State of Wisconsin.

**Lunch break at 12:00 until  
Meeting reconvened at 12:18**

**Council Strategic Plan Development:** Steve inquired how many people rely on American Sign Language (ASL) as a primary form of communication. Amber noted that 3.24% of the Wisconsin population, or 184,000 individuals, have identified that they are living with hearing loss. Statistics provided by Gallaudet University in 1974 (the last time this data was gathered) show that .14% of the population rely on ASL as a primary form of communication; extrapolated, this would indicate 7,962 individuals in Wisconsin primarily communicate through ASL. The Council received this information to make better informed decisions as they relate to the strategic plan.

Council members selected their own priority areas and presented them to the group to be voted on by the council as a whole. After discussion and voting, the Council decided their key priorities would include:

- Finding and promoting educational opportunities for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind communities
- Improved communication and relations with the public
- Hearing loop and telecoil education in collaboration with other statewide stakeholders
- Exploring opportunities to improve employment outcomes for individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf blind, promote better employment and increased access to employment
- Updating and improving the council bylaws.

**ACTION:** ODHH will develop and provide a strategic map and a strategic plan with the goals identified.

**ACTION:** Lisa will draft a communication plan.

**Motion:** David motioned to adjourn the meeting (Lisa seconded).

**Passed:** unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 3:32 P.M.

Compiled by: Mason Aumanstal

Respectfully submitted by: Thomas O'Connor, Secretary